



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/471,689	12/23/1999	SELMER CONRAD BRINGSJORD	Y0999-507	7822

21254 7590 10/24/2002

MCGINN & GIBB, PLLC  
8321 OLD COURTHOUSE ROAD  
SUITE 200  
VIENNA, VA 22182-3817

EXAMINER

BOOKER, KELVIN E

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2121

DATE MAILED: 10/24/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>
	09/471,689	BRINGSJORD ET AL. <i>[Signature]</i>
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>
	Kelvin E Booker	2121

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 July 2002.

2a) This action is **FINAL**.                  2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-32 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 1-28,30 and 31 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 29 and 32 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some \* c) None of:

1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

#### Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ .	6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>Detailed Office Action</i> .

Art Unit: 2121

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Response to Amendment*

1. In Amendment "A", filed July 15, 2002 (see file wrapper paper no. 7), claims 1, 10, 15-20, 29 and 30 were amended; and claim 32 was added. **Claims 1-32** are presented for examination.

### *Response to Arguments*

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 29 and 32 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112*

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. **Claim 29** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claim 29, the word "system" is employed in an attempt to use a "means" clause to recite claim elements as a means for "generating a story". However, since no "means" is specified preceding the disclosure of the elemental functions, it is

Art Unit: 2121

impossible to determine the equivalents of the element, as required by 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph. The disclosed claim 29, cites a system for performing a specified function, but fails to disclose the necessary system elements (e.g., means plus function). See *Ex parte Klumb*, 159 USPQ 694 (Bd. App. 1967).

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

5. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

6. **Claim 32** is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the invention as disclosed in claim 32 is directed to non-statutory subject matter. While the claims are in the technological arts, they are not limited to practical applications in the technological arts.

Specifically, the claim is a series of steps to be performed on a computer, but the idea is disclosed abstractly from any particular practical application. Further, claim 32 focuses on a method for generating a story, but fails to explicitly teach of the steps which encompass the computer implemented method for theme based story generation.

To constitutionally interpret the word “process”, the Supreme Court has held that:  
“\*\*\*A process is a mode of treatment of certain materials to produce a given result. It is an act, or a series of acts, performed upon the subject matter to be transformed and reduced to a different state or thing. \*\*\*The Process requires that certain things should be

Art Unit: 2121

done with certain substances, and in a certain order; but the tools to be used in doing this may be a secondary consequence.”(emphasis added) Diamond, Commission of Patents and Trademarks v. Diehr and Lutton, 209 USPQ 1, 6 (1981) quoting Cochrane v. Deener, 94 U.S. 780, 787-788 (1876).

This Constitutional interpretation of the word “process” is a long-standing one that the Supreme Court requires to be applied in interpreting 35 USC 101. Diamond v. Diehr at 6. Consequently, the use of that interpretation is Constitutionally required when we interpret the Federal Circuit’s standard that a “new and useful process” is one that produces a useful, concrete, and tangible result”. Cf. State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group, Inc., 47 USPQ2d 1596, 1600-1601 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

Applicant discloses no “certain substances” that have been “transformed or reduced” in that applicant’s claims disclose no specific computer-readable medium, no manipulation of specific data representing physical objects or activities (pre-computer activity), nor do they disclose any specific independent physical acts being performed by the invention (post-computer activity).

The claims merely manipulate abstract ideas in general without limitation to a practical application where “certain substances” are transformed or reduced.

On this basis, **claim 32** is rejected under 35 USC 101.

*Allowable Subject Matter*

7. **Claims 1-28, 30 and 31** are allowed.

Art Unit: 2121

8. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

the cited prior art fails to explicitly teach of a *theme based* method of automatically generating a story wherein elements of the theme are expound upon in a simulation engine for generating a plot, which employs knowledge generated characters, relationships and events.

***Conclusion***

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 2121

10. An inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kelvin Booker whose telephone number is (703) 308-4088. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM-5:30 PM EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Follansbee, can be reached on (703) 305-8498. The fax number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 746-7239.

An inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-3900.



K.E.B.

Art Unit 2121

October 18, 2002



JOHN A. FOLLANSBEE  
PRIMARY EXAMINER